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SUBJECT: JAPAN'S GOVERNMENT REVISES H1N1 INFLUENZA GUIDANCE

REF: TOKYO 1171 and previous

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1. (U) Summary: The Japanese Government revised its guidelines for responding to H1N1 influenza outbreaks June 19. Acknowledging the difficulty in using border controls to keep the H1N1 virus from entering Japan, the GOJ will, in many cases, allow arriving passengers with flu symptoms to enter the country without a quarantine period and to recover and await test results at home or at their hotels. Local governments will follow up regarding medical care and self-isolation measures with patients who test positive for H1N1. To prepare for a possible second wave of H1N1 this fall, the GOJ designed its guidance to focus on finding patients swiftly and treating those with severe symptoms. While hospitalization will likely only be required for serious cases, the GOJ has stipulated all medical institutions should be willing to accept flu patients unless the facility determines patients the facility is already caring for would be put at risk. End Summary.

Basic Guidelines

2. (U) Japan's government issued revised guidelines June 19 updating and consolidating earlier guidance for responding to H1N1. The GOJ's revised guidance emphasizes four basic principles: 1) Giving patients with severe symptoms priority for hospital beds and treatment; 2) Preventing in-hospital transmission of the virus; 3) Closely monitoring for any virus mutations and outbreak trends of both seasonal and novel influenza strains; and 4) Implementing public health measures to limit the spread of the infection. The GOJ intends to review these guidelines if the virus exhibits significant changes or mutations.

Border Procedures

13. (U) The GOJ plans to raise awareness of H1N1 influenza among individuals entering Japan by distributing information at the ports of entry quarantine areas. Authorities will continue to request passengers report any symptoms and will conduct on-board quarantine checks in cases where passengers exhibiting possible symptoms are present. However, border officials will not require a Polymer Chain Reaction (PCR) exam for arriving passengers with flu symptoms, but rather will allow them to enter the country and recover and await test results at home or at their hotels. Those exhibiting flu symptoms may be requested to use non-public transportation and wear a mask en route from the port of entry to their residence. Should several people in a group of travelers exhibit symptoms, quarantine authorities will conduct a preliminary test and a PCR exam. During testing, however, patients will be allowed to go home or to their hotels. Local governments will follow up with patients who test positive for H1N1 regarding medical care and self-isolation measures.

Local Government and Medical Response

14. (U) The GOJ's revised guidance calls on local governments to request infected patients and those having close contact with patients to self-monitor and recover at home. Local government health authorities should provide a PCR test and anti-viral drugs at an early stage to patients with underlying health conditions. Hospitalization will be available if necessary. Call centers will provide information on hospitals accepting patients and consult those recovering at home.

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15. (U) The revised guidance notes all medical institutions should admit people with flu symptoms, but are advised to create a separate waiting area or separate service hours. While hospitalization is seen to be unnecessary for the majority of H1N1 flu patients, those with severe symptoms should be able to seek care at any medical institution, not just designated hospitals. However, local governments can direct certain medical institutions, such as cancer institutes or obstetrical institutes, to refuse flu patients if their current patients would be put at risk. Local governments will continue to request schools in which students are infected to close if necessary.

ZUMWALT